BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

Ministry of Management Services

Infoline

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- **British Colun.bia's unemployment rate decreased in January to 8.2%**
- **There were $5.7 billion in building permits issued in 2002 in BC, over 14% more than 2001.**
- **BC's population expands to 4,151,000 in the third quarter of 2002**

Labour

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate continued to fall to 8.2% (seasonally adjusted) in January.** The decline in the jobless rate occurred as the labour force shrank (-0.4%) at a faster rate than the number of people employed (-0.2%).

  The decline in employment was observed in both the goods (-0.1%) and services (-0.2%) sectors. On the goods side, employment in manufacturing slipped (-0.1%) and the number of jobs in agriculture (-7.0%) and utilities (-6.2%) fell after strong growth in December. However, the number of jobs in forestry, fishing and mining (+7.1%) continued to grow in January.

  On the services side, the trend was generally down, with some exceptions. The number of people with jobs in trade (+1.0%), transportation and warehousing (+1.1%), and education services (+7.4%) grew. These increases were more than offset by drops in professional, scientific and technical services (-5.2%), and health care and social assistance (-5.5%).

  The number of part-time jobs (-1.2%) declined while full-time employment (+0.1%) rose slightly. Employment was up in the public sector (+0.8%) but fell in the private sector (-0.2%), and there were fewer self-employed workers (-1.2%). Men (+0.4%) saw an increase in jobs, while women experienced job loss (-1.0%) in January.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Canada's unemployment rate inched down in January to 7.4%, as the number of people employed stayed constant while the labour force (-0.1%) decreased slightly.** Manitoba (4.9%) maintained the lowest unemployment rate in the country, with fairly low rates in the other prairie provinces (5.5% in Alberta and 5.8% in Saskatchewan). Newfoundland and Labrador experienced the largest decrease in its unemployment rate (-0.6 percentage points) but still had the highest rate (17.9%) during January. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Unemployment rates fell in the most populated regions of the province, and rose in the more rural areas.** Lower Mainland/Southwest (-0.7%), Vancouver Island/Coast (-1.0%), and Thompson/Okanagan (-0.4%) all saw declines in the unemployment rate. The jobless rates in Kootenay (+1.5%) and Cariboo (+1.3%) continued to rise in January. *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Economy

- **Municipalities in BC issued $5.7 billion in building permits in 2002, expanding 14.1% from 2001.** The intense demand in the most populated regions of the province for new housing was the cornerstone of this exceptional year. Non-residential construction activities were slow moving through the first part of the year, and as a result were below their 2001 level (-17.0%). The value of residential permits totalled $3.9 billion in 2002, soaring 38.9% over 2001.

  Regionally Vancouver Island/Coast (+21.3%) and Mainland/Southwest (+19.2%) led the province in terms of dollar value growth. Both regions were powered by vigorous construction intentions in the residential sector. Nechako (+41.2%) saw the highest proportionate increase in permits during the year, due to a spike (+87.1%) in non-residential permits. Nationally, $45.9 billion in building

Report Profile of Women Entrepreneurs

Did you know...
Managers in British Columbia are the least likely among provinces to rate the current state of labour-management relationships as "acceptable or better."

permits were issued in 2002, a rise of 16.0%. Like the province, the climb was due to residential permits, which were up 32.1% from 2001. For the first time since 1989, the 200,000-unit mark was surpassed for a single year, as municipalities across the country authorised the construction of 212,400 new dwelling units in 2002. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The number of help-wanted ads published in newspapers in British Columbia slipped (-0.9%) in January.** There were fewer jobs advertised across the country, as the national index fell 1.7%. Residents of Prince Edward Island (+1.5%) and Nova Scotia (+1.0%) were the only ones to see an increase in the number of job ads in their newspapers in January. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Demographics

- **British Columbia's population reached 4,151,041 at the end of the third quarter of 2002, an increase of almost 10,000 (+0.24%) from the previous quarter.** Population growth was down slightly from the corresponding quarter of 2001 (+0.33%). This slowing resulted in part from a decrease in international immigrants coupled with an increase in international emigrants. This was the case in all provinces, with the exception of Prince Edward Island. Despite this shift, net migration continued to be the main source of population growth for the province, adding just over 6,000 net new residents within our borders between July-September 2002. Only Ontario (28,000) and Alberta (9,000) drew more during the third quarter. Nationally, the population reached 31,485,600, inching up 0.23% since the second quarter. *Source: SC Catalogue 91-002-XPB, Vol 16, no 3*

- **Fewer people were tying the knot in British Columbia during 1999 than in 1998.** The number of marriages in the province dipped 0.6% in 1999 to 21,622. This was not far behind the number in Quebec (22,910), despite Quebec having a much larger population. Nationally, the number of marriages increased 1.9% to 155,742. The average age of brides was 31.3 years in 1999, up 2.5 years from a decade earlier. Grooms were a little older, averaging 33.8 years on their wedding day, an increase of 2.4 years from 1989. Since 1979, the proportion of brides who had been previously divorced has increased substantially. In 1999, they accounted for 21.6% of the total, compared with only 14.1% two decades earlier. The trend for grooms was similar, since 1979, the proportion rose from 15.6% to 22.1%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Tourism

- **Room revenues grew (+9.0%, seasonally adjusted) to $128.8 million in October, rebounding from a low (-6.7%) in September.** A jump in revenues in Mainland/Southwest (+12.5%) paved the way for the province's recovery. This was a strong improvement from the 9.0% decline in the previous month in this region. Vancouver Island/Coast (+4.1%) and Thompson-Okanagan (+10.7%) followed suit with sizeable gains. North Coast (-7.7%) and Kootenay (-2.8%) were the only regions that saw revenues slip in October.Source: *Source: BC Stats*

- **Visitor entries to Canada through BC border crossings slipped in November, dropping 1.6% (seasonally adjusted).** The decline in entries was largely due to fewer people entering from the US (-1.6%). A decrease in the number of people taking overnight trips from the US (-4.1%) more than offset a rise in the number of same-day visitors (+1.3%). Entries from overseas were also down (-1.9%) due to fewer visitors from Asian countries (-8.3%). The number of travellers from Europe (+15.9%) and the South Pacific (+2.7%) rose in November.

The number of Canadians making same-day trips from BC to the US grew (+2.8%) for the fourth straight month. There were also more Canadians returning from trips overseas (+2.0%) in November. Total Canadian re-entries (+0.6%) have been on the rise since April 2002. *Source: BC Stats*

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Infoline Report

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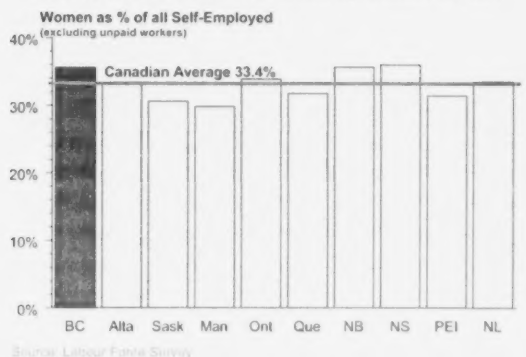
Profile of Women Entrepreneurs

In November 2002, Prime Minister Chrétien announced the creation of the Prime Minister's Task Force on Women Entrepreneurs. The task force was initiated as part of the government's goal to make Canada one of the most innovative countries in the world by 2010. The Prime Minister feels that women entrepreneurs can make an important contribution toward achieving that goal.

Provincial comparison

The objectives of the task force include finding ways to encourage women's entrepreneurship. In British Columbia, approximately 35.6% of all business owners were women in 2001. This was the third highest rate among the provinces behind only Nova Scotia (36.0%) and New Brunswick (35.7%) and significantly higher than the national average of 33.4%.

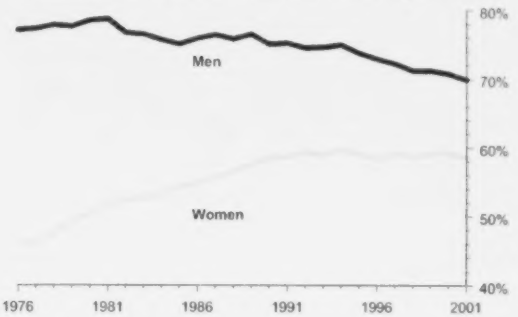
Of all provinces, British Columbia had the third highest proportion of businesses owned by women in 2001



Source: Labour Force Survey

The proportion of British Columbia business owners that are women has increased by over 11 percentage points in the last 25 years, from 24.4% in 1976. This is likely a direct result of increasing participation by women in the labour force. Labour force participation by women in British Columbia has increased from about 46% in 1976 to around 59% in 2001. Over the same period, the participation rate of men dropped from 77% to 70%.

The gap between men and women in terms of labour force participation rates has narrowed over the last 25 years in BC, but is still significant



Source: Labour Force Survey

The gap between male and female labour force participation has narrowed, which partially explains why there are proportionately more women business owners compared to 25 years ago, but the remaining differential is still significant. It does not seem likely that this gap will shrink much further. As the population ages, participation rates for both men and women will fall and the gap will likely remain fairly stable.[1] As such, attempts to encourage an increase in women's entrepreneurship could prove a difficult challenge.

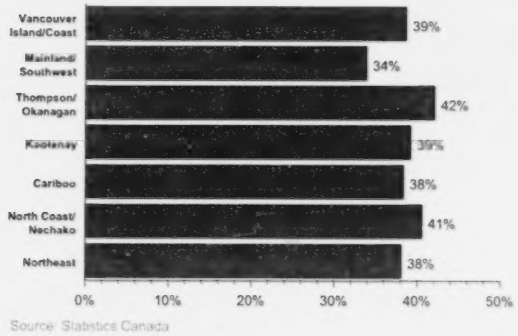
Regional differences

In 2001, approximately 14% of working women in BC were self-employed, compared to 22% of working men. The Thompson/Okanagan Re-

[1] The participation rate is based on the population 15 and over, which means as a greater proportion of the population reaches retirement age, participation in the labour force will decline.

gion had the highest percentage of self-employed who were women, at 42%. The Mainland/Southwest had the lowest percentage, with women comprising only 34% of the self-employed in that region. This seems counterintuitive, since women are more likely to work in the service professions compared to men and the Lower Mainland is more service-oriented than the remainder of the province. However, it may be that there are fewer opportunities for paid employment for women outside the Lower Mainland forcing them to create their own opportunities.

The Mainland/Southwest region had the lowest proportion of self-employed that were women in 2001

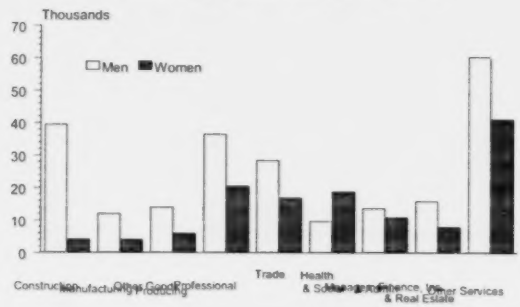


Source: Statistics Canada

Industry breakdown

Not only are women in general more likely to work in a service-related industry (92% of women compared to 69% of men), but this is also true of self-employed women (89% versus 72% of men). The one industry sector where self-employed women outnumber men is health and social services. In all other industry aggregations, men outnumber women, particularly in the goods producing industries.

Very few self-employed women worked in goods producing industries in BC in 2001

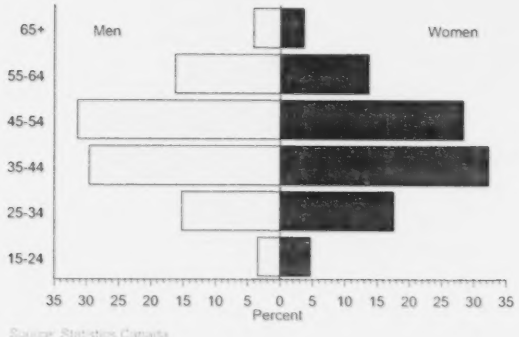


Source: Labour Force Survey

Age distribution

Another way that self-employed women differ from self-employed men is in the age distribution. Self-employed women generally have a younger age structure compared to their male counterparts.

The age distribution of self-employed in BC was somewhat younger for women compared to men in 2001



Source: Statistics Canada

Class of self-employment

A far smaller percentage of businesses owned by women were incorporated (25%) compared to those owned by men (43%). Women were also less likely to have paid employees (27%) than were men (39%).

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/02	% change on one year ago
BC	4,151.0	0.9
Canada	31,485.6	0.9
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	2001 Revised	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	130,859	1.2
GDP *($ 1997 millions)*	123,912	-0.2
GDP *($ 1997 per Capita)*	30,252	-1.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1997 per Capita)*	19,513	1.2
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Nov	2,899	-0.7
Merchandise Exports - Nov	2,298	-5.4
Retail Sales - Nov	3,391	0.0
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		12-month avg
(all items - 1992=100)	Dec '02	% change
BC	118.8	2.3
Canada	120.4	2.2
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Jan '03	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,167	-0.4
Employed - BC	1,990	-0.2
Unemployed - BC	177	-2.9
		Dec '02
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.2	8.4
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.4	7.5
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Feb 5/03	Feb 6/02
Prime Business Rate	4.50	3.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	4.90	4.55
- 5 year	6.60	6.85
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Feb 5/03	Feb 6/02
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.5195	1.6040
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6574	0.6232
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jan '03	one year ago
BC	679.52	3.6
Canada	658.15	2.2

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www bankofcanada.ca

Released this week by BC STATS

- Tourism Sector Monitor, January 2003

Next week

- Labour Force Statistics, January 2003

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